Ron Newman

US policy, post-Iran: a recipe for war?

A spectre is haunting America — the spectre of jingoism. For a few short post-Vietnam years in the mid-70's, the American people had seen a genuine, lasting resistance to the idea of US intervention around the world. Our Central Intelligence Agency came under harsh attacks for its role in "instabilizing" foreign governments (notably Chile's), and the US resisted the temptation to intervene militarily in Angola and Ethiopia when civil wars broke out in those countries. But now, the "containment of Communism" as the ostensible basis of our foreign policy, giving our government a rationale for military activity, is being restored.

Human rights policy abandoned

But a government that just spent seven months trying to prop up the Shah of Iran is going to have a hard time maintaining much credibility when it talks about human rights. In response, our policymakers have apparently decided not to bother trying to repeat ethical content to our commercial affairs. Instead, with apparent cooperation of our country's news media, they are now proclaiming the virtues of flexing the national muscle. Late last week, President Carter ordered $400 million worth of tanks and jeeps shipped to formerly obscure North Yemen, along with 90 American "technical" advisers. In doing Carter to involve an emergency clause in the 1976 Arms Export Control Act, which normally allows Congress 60 days to review and possibly veto such arms sales.

Scattered news reports also tell of plans to station a US naval force in the Indian Ocean, to assist Saudi Arabian in "-invasion of Yemen, and even to establish a "security zone" along the borders of US and "moderate" Arab governments. And a report in yesterday's New York Times (again quoting unidentified "advisers" and "officials") tells us that our policy in Southeast Asia will be to "desert a force in the region," to cancel planned withdrawals from the area and to increase military aid to such "pro-Western countries" as Thailand and Indonesia.

Taken individually, each of these actions may look unimportant. But taken together, they add up to a new approach to the rest of the world. The new style is well represented by the plethora of underhanded maneuvers that have been tagged forward to conceal our government's actions in Yemen. "It is most important to show Saudi Arabia that we take the security of the Arabian peninsula seriously," one such statement in the March 19 New Yorker. "We are demonstrating that the trauma of the Vietnam experience is behind us, and we are prepared to act to protect our interests wherever they are threatened," another told the Boston Globe.

This crude national chauvinism is not confined to the executive branch of the government, either. Six bills now in Congress propose to require all 18-year-olds to register for the draft, and two of the bills would require the Army Reserve to actually draft 200,000 young Americans.

Press chimes in

Jingoism has also begun to pollute our news media. The February 26 Newsweek cover story, "America's world of West: Feeling Helpless," last week's Time carried a long "Special Report" entitled "Searching for the Global Village: the panel of experts forecast global "analysis" which included former CIA chief Richard Helms. Among the conclusions of the panel: "The US must develop, and quickly, a policy demonstrating a will and commitment to remain involved in the crecent, and to use its power to protect its friends and vital interests therein. This, it said, "will require a commitment of men and military aid with a military flag showing and perhaps even covert operations." (The New York Times chimed in last Sunday, with a Drew Middleton piece headlined the "Riding the Flag Isn't the Same as Using It."

Worst of all, however, was George Will's essay in the current National Review which asks Americans to forget how bad the Vietnam war was for America. But maybe this country has already forgotten. From looking at the current attitude toward "the war" that less than a decade ago, millions marched in the streets to protest American involvement in Vietnam. Administration officials aren't likely to abandon their slurred line unitarily — after all, they aren't the ones who will have to fight if one of their "policy options" leads the country into another foreign war. If the United States drags any further towards such an involve-ment, it may one day again be up to the young people of the United States either submit or resist.

Bob Wasserman

Anything but legalization

The drive for legalization of marijuana has gone too far. Already several states have decriminalized it to the point where possession is only a minor misdemeanor, and the rest of the country threatens to follow. On the surface this looks like a housing for marijuana-users, but real pot aficionados realize that legalized dope just wouldn't be the same. For one thing, much of the folklore and thrill of smoking would be gone.

The famous Arlo Guthrie balad "Coming into Los Angeles, carrying a couple of bricks" would have been lost if marijuana were sold at the duty-free import shops. Would John Prine's "Il-legal Smile" be the same? And who would want to "bogarting a joint if a reefer dis- pensing machine were available right around the corner.

This brings me to a second consideration: What happens when American business and Madison Avenue realize the potential profit in pot? Already a tobacco company in Kentucky has patented the brand name "Acapulco Gold" for a future reefer-package. And if another company ever gets around to marketing a "Panama Red" brand of dope, they'll probably get Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead to endorse it.

Advertising pitches for the new marijuana market could rival those of the cigarette industry for offensiveness. "I'll walk a mile for the munchies" would dominate the airwaves. Television would present a panoramic view of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury and the voice-over would say: "Welcome to Marijuana Country." The head would replace the cowboy as the national symbol of munchies.

The legalization movement itself is disdainful to the traditional dope-smokers culture. Marijuana advocacy has moved from the underground to the establishment. The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) is a rock and roll political group which employs lawyers and tax deduc-tible contributions to further its cause.

The whole quest for illicit entertainment brings to mind an unreel-package. And if another company ever gets around to marketing a "Panama Red" brand of dope, they'll probably get Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead to endorse it.

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To the Editor:

As a result of the increase in the percentage of females applying to MIT, there will be a drastic decrease in the percentage of males. In answer to the MIT "men" who are seeking better places to go, we, the interested and concerned females on campus, felt that there should be greater student input into the direction of the newly endangered species of MIT "men." In particular, we put forth three particular suggestions:

1. Encourage more tall, dark and handsome, socially adept students to apply.

2. Have interviewers administer the Baker purity test to the interviewees.

3. Give preference to cute, sexy jocks.

Steve Fann '80 — Chairman
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